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Chair

Ms. Julie Dabrusin

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● (0950)

[*English*]

The Chair (Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.)): We're going to resume our meeting in public.

I would like to welcome our witnesses.

[*Translation*]

We are continuing our study on gender parity on the boards and senior leadership levels of Canadian artistic and cultural organizations.

[*English*]

We have with us by video conference, Mr. MacDougall, of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP. Here with us, we have Vanessa Morgan, from Soulpepper Theatre Company; and Scott Garvie and Marguerite Pigott of the Canadian Media Producers Association.

For technical reasons, it usually works better to start with the video conference.

Also, I would like to welcome Ms. Falk to our committee today.

Why don't we start with Mr. MacDougall, please, for his presentation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Andrew MacDougall (Partner, Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP): Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

Thank you for according me the honour of speaking with you this morning to share my observations on improving gender diversity.

[*English*]

I'm a partner at the law firm of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP. We are a national corporate law firm with offices in Calgary, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver.

We have a proud history of leadership in gender diversity at our firm. Osler was the first large corporate law firm in Canada to admit a woman as a partner, and that partner, Bertha Wilson, went on to become the first female justice appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. Only a few years ago, another female partner of our firm, Suzanne Côté, joined the Supreme Court of Canada. Our firm has a female co-managing partner and has had one continuously for 20 years, and one of the co-chairs of our firm is a woman.

That being said, we need to do more. Although 47% of our associates are now women, only 26% of our partners are female.

I lead the Osler corporate governance practice, advising boards, in-house counsel, and others on directors' duties and liabilities, stakeholder engagement, disclosure, and other governance matters. My long-standing interest in corporate governance is reflected first in my involvement as a staff member of the Toronto Stock Exchange committee on corporate governance, also known as the Dey committee. Then, I've been a member of the risk oversight and governance board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants and now am a member of the American College of Governance Counsel.

I am not, however, an expert on the arts. My focus has been on the governance of publicly traded companies. For the last three years, I have led our firm's annual review of Canadian public company disclosure of diversity. Copies of our most recent report were distributed to the committee earlier this week.

Osler is very proud of this industry-leading report. It summarizes the progress made in increasing the representation of women on publicly traded boards and in executive officer roles. It also summarizes legal and non-legal diversity developments affecting public companies and it highlights best practices adopted by companies to improve their gender diversity.

Although our work has focused on public company diversity, there are a number of lessons learned from this work that may inform the work of this committee, and I would like to share five of them with you today.

First, gathering information is a necessary first step. It is said that if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it. Numbers provide a useful starting point for discussion. In addition, as highlighted in our report, results vary greatly between organizations based on size and industry, and I would expect similar variations among arts organizations, based on size and geography. It is important to understand these variations in order to better assess the burden of different policy initiatives on differently situated organizations.

One way to gather information is to require an organization seeking funding to report on their diversity and on their initiative to improve the representation of women in the organization. Recently, Toronto City Council asked staff to come up with a mechanism to collect information on the gender diversity of corporate boards of entities doing business with the city. Last year, the Office of Minority and Women Inclusion of the Securities Exchange Commission in the United States released a diversity assessment report designed to help regulated entities conduct self-assessments of their diversity policies and practices and to serve as a template for submitting information about their self-assessments.

Second, below the board level it is hard to identify an appropriate measure for assessing the representation of women in senior leadership roles. The Canadian Securities Administrators requires disclosure of the number of executive officers of the company, including all major subsidies of the company, who are women. However, the number of executive officers at any public company varies wildly, from a handful to as many as 211, making comparison very difficult. A better focus might be to identify the proportion of women among the 10 most highly compensated employees at the organization.

● (0955)

Third, it is important to provide concrete tools to initiate a meaningful discussion of diversity at the board level. I created, with the support of the Institute of Corporate Directors, a free, customizable, downloadable board diversity policy template to quickly generate a form of diversity policy for any organization. Its purpose was to provide a focus for a board discussion of the need to increase gender diversity, and last year we noted some progress in diversity policy adoption rates, with 47% of companies disclosing that they had adopted a written diversity policy. The Canadian Securities Administrators have noted that there is a greater likelihood of a company adding a woman to the board if the company has previously adopted a written board diversity policy.

Fourth, while academic literature supporting the benefits of increased gender diversity is helpful, it is important that those who fund artistic endeavours actively advocate for greater diversity. In our second annual report, we noted the lack of any improvement in results year over year. However, institutional investors began, in late 2016 and early 2017, publicly to express interest in diversity, and it had an impact on companies, resulting in a significant drop in all-male boards of directors and an increase in an overall percentage of board seats held by women. Boards in the arts community are more likely to take positive action to improve the representation of women in the organization if their sources of funding publicly advocate for change.

Fifth, there is a need for more guidance on best practices for advancing women in senior roles in organizations. In our report, we highlighted such best practices as improving recruitment criteria for identifying potential candidates; training programs on best practices and identification of unconscious bias; the use of mentorship programs to develop high-potential leaders; networking programs, both internal and external, to provide support and sharing of ideas; the establishment of diversity and inclusion committees; workplace practices to better retain high-potential women; and continued monitoring of progress of women in leadership roles within the organization.

I'd like to make one final comment. There is a need to improve gender diversity in leadership roles, and that is a worthy goal, but there's also a need to improve in other diversity characteristics. For example, last October, Statistics Canada reported that visible minorities make up 22.3% of the Canadian population, yet according to 2016 data from the Canadian Board Diversity Council, only 4.5% of directors of *Financial Post* 500 companies are from visible minorities. I hope that what is learned from focusing on gender diversity will have a wider application.

Thank you.

● (1000)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now go to Vanessa Morgan from the Soulpepper Theatre Company, please.

Ms. Vanessa Morgan (Board Chair, Soulpepper Theatre Company): Thank you for the opportunity to share my views with you today. I commend the standing committee for looking into the issues of gender parity in arts and cultural organizations.

I'll give you little background on me. I run an investment management company in Toronto and have been involved as a board volunteer with social service and arts organizations since the 1990s. I've been on the Soulpepper Theatre Company board since 2011, was appointed as the chair-elect last November, and took over officially this February.

Personally, I have experienced no barriers in joining boards, but I am president of a charitable foundation that happens to donate a fair amount of money in the province of Ontario, particularly to arts organizations, so the organizations like to try to keep me and others like me engaged. It's a perspective that's different from other people's.

I do find that in terms of lack of inclusion it's worse in the corporate world. I think the arts and cultural sector is ahead of other industries in terms of gender diversity. For arts boards in particular, I don't see gender diversity as the main issue. It's more an issue of diversity in general, more economic and ethnic diversity.

Volunteers are almost by definition persons of privilege, people who have both spare time and spare money, so that tends to focus the pool of potential directors when boards are seeking new members. To me, diversity of experience and perspective is what is most important for any board, whether it's in the arts sector or a corporate board. While adding women to a male-dominated board can add some diversity, if all those women have the same socio-economic background, it's not really going to broaden the perspective of the board.

Personally, I don't believe in quotas. I feel they are paternalistic and can result in tokenism, which in my opinion is actually worse than no representation. "Box-ticking" doesn't mean inclusion. Quotas can result in resentment on the part of men and doubt on the part of women if they feel they've been added to a board only because they are female. Funders in the arts and culture sector can make it known that diversity is important by virtue of questions in the applications for funding.

I also feel that women need more encouragement to put themselves forward. Gender parity and pay equity in the corporate world would go a long way to putting women on an even footing with men financially, and things like affordable child care could help with time constraints, because, really, it's money and time that people need to be board volunteers. I'm sure the Liberal Party spent a great deal of time on encouraging the women who form part of the gender-balanced cabinet in the lead-up before 2015, so perhaps some lessons could be learned there.

I also suggest that the same activity is required to ensure greater ethnic diversity on arts boards among arts patrons and audiences. Board mentors can be helpful in assisting new board members in acclimatizing to the culture of a particular organization and the board.

In terms of arts leadership, it seems to be happening a little bit on its own. Search committees are all looking for female candidates.

Each artistic discipline is different. Performing arts organizations have a particularly strong history of women in administrative leadership roles and as volunteers on small and mid-sized boards. As an example, Soulpepper is doing a search for an executive director, and we have 12 people on our long list, five of whom are women.

However, there is more of an issue on the artistic leadership front, specifically in the artistic director role. I think it stems from structural issues in Canada. There are thousands of small organizations spread across the country, only a handful of organizations of scale, and not even many mid-sized organizations, so it's hard for people to gain the experience to move from a small organization to manage a larger one.

● (1005)

People often need to go to other countries to gain that experience, and you hear about a lot of arts boards that end up hiring someone who's non-Canadian because they weren't able to find a Canadian with the skills that are needed. Search committees all want women on the their short list, but there are not a lot of women who have had the relevant experience in Canada because there are just not that many organizations to provide it.

At Soulpepper specifically, we haven't had any issues in recruiting women to the Soulpepper board, but we do need a greater ethnic diversity, and we need to add a younger perspective. The board members all seem to be aging at the same pace.

A lot of arts boards expect people who become board members to become significant donors as well, and that can be a barrier. At Soulpepper, we have a low dollar value of what's expected to be raised or gathered, but in fact we're willing to waive that expectation if there's a potential board member who would be an excellent addition to the board but isn't able to do that financially.

Currently, the Soulpepper Theatre board is 36% female, but 57% of the board leadership roles are held by women, including me as chair, one of two co-chairs, the chair of the governance and nominating committee, and one of the two co-chairs of the human resources committee.

The governance and nominating committee has identified diversity and inclusion as a priority and has committed to achieving gender parity on the board by 2020. Our HR committee is working with KPMG on a diversity and inclusion assessment of the organization. At present, 63% of the senior management staff is female.

Within Soulpepper, the trend is definitely positive. In 2017, Soulpepper issued contracts with 350 individual artists, and 47% of those were women. Over the past 10 years, that ratio has actually hovered between the 45% and 50% range. However, if we look at female artists in leadership roles, such as director or playwright, that number is lower. There is still work to be done, although we're on the right track. In 2011, only 13% of our shows were directed by women. In 2018, of our announced programming to date, which takes us to October, 58% of the shows are directed by women, including the three that are presently on stage. In 2011 only 25% of our resident artists were women, and in 2018 it's 45%.

Perhaps the most important way that we can address the gender diversity issue and diversity in general is by looking to the future. Soulpepper runs what we call the "Soulpepper Academy", which is a paid residency theatre training program. It plays an important national role in nurturing the next generation of leadership. Over the past decade, we've graduated 53 artists who have gone on to meaningful and impactful careers, 54% of them women, including actors and also producers, designers, directors, and playwrights. In our most recent academy, 75% were women.

We have some suggestions.

One is that we all continue work to educate people on the importance of the arts and culture sector and to explain the economic argument for it, as well as the significant employment it provides and the spinoff economic benefits, so that people understand why it's worthy of continued support.

Next, more training and education programs would be helpful to address the structural issues across the country.

As well, providing scholarships to enable people to study and gain experience abroad would be very helpful, because arts leadership really is a global market and recruiters do look to see where people have received their training.

Also helpful would be financial support for diverse projects. Arts organizations may not be willing to take a financial risk on a project that's not really aligned with their historical presentations, but organizations do need to showcase work from diverse communities in order to encourage people from those communities to come to the organizations and then ultimately join the board.

I have just a couple of other thoughts.

Bill C-25 requirements for the for-profit corporations could be applied to not-for-profit corporations as well, to ensure some transparency in women and compensation.

Finally, it might be helpful if the Not-for-profit Corporations Act could be amended so that boards would be able to provide a small honorarium to the board members, which would help with the feasibility for people from marginalized communities to participate.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now to go Scott Garvie and Marguerite Pigott from the CMPA.

● (1010)

Mr. Scott Garvie (Chair, Board of Directors, Canadian Media Producers Association): Good morning, everyone.

My name is Scott Garvie. I'm the chair of the board of the Canadian Media Producers Association. With me today is Marguerite Pigott, vice-president of outreach and strategic initiatives at the association.

The Canadian Media Producers Association has over 400 member companies across Canada producing and exporting film, television, and interactive digital media, which travels around the world and across platforms. Some recent examples of the work by our members include the Academy Award-nominated feature film *The Breadwinner*, the adaption of Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* on Netflix and CBC, and my own *Murdoch Mysteries* and *Frankie Drake* on CBC.

Our association is taking an active leadership role with other stakeholders in our industry to ensure proactive steps are being taken towards achieving gender parity in front of and behind the camera, as well as ensuring respectful workplaces and other timely important initiatives. We are delighted that this committee is now looking at the question of ensuring gender parity and diversity in the leadership of the cultural institutions in Canada and on the boards of those institutions.

Marguerite will share with you shortly some recommendations we have, but first I wanted to speak briefly about how the CMPA, as a member-driven organization, has tried to deal with the issue on our elected board. We've basically taken three steps: recognition, action, and opportunity.

First, on recognition, we recognize that gender balance is a challenge within our own organization at the board level. We reviewed the historical makeup of our board and realized that in the eight years prior to our last election, we averaged around 32% of our board being female. We wanted to increase that percentage, so we went to our board and we amended the board election process to have a mandate to specifically recognize gender balance and diversity as objectives going forward. This was unanimously approved by our board as a guiding principle for our governance.

Second, on action, we wanted to be proactive and drive change at the same time that we were engaging in the slower process of bylaw review. Our first step was to look at the renewal of the board. We asked long-standing board members or had them agree not to run again in order to create a high availability of board seats. This, along with the impact of the election results, resulted in having about 40% new members on our board of 24 as of the last election. We also did board outreach to each of our 400 member companies to encourage involvement on the board and on our committees. Our bylaws mandate regional representation, so we also encouraged each region to try to get to a fifty-fifty female-male split of nominees for the next election.

Though we had an unprecedented number of candidates run in the last election, we weren't sure that this would be enough to trigger meaningful change on the diversity and parity equation. We took the further step to have 18 of our 24 seats elected and the remaining seats appointed, so that we could balance the composition of the board as needed. We took this plan to our members in a membership vote, and I'm proud to say that this approach was unanimously approved by all our members. The election process resulted in five of the 18 elected seats being held by women, as well as five of the seven appointed seats, so that our board now sits at 10 women and 13 men—43%.

Third, on opportunity, we have tried to encourage more female involvement and more leadership roles at the committee level. The CMPA has 19 committees. Appointments to committee chair or co-chair roles were made with gender balance in mind. Additionally, each of these new committee leaders was tasked with populating their committees, thereby bringing new voices and diverse perspectives into the leadership structure of the CMPA.

As these new committee members grow in expertise and experience, they become potential candidates for the board going forward. Their involvement and leadership on these committees will naturally increase these new entrants' stature within the association. This is opportunity in training, with a view to enhancing parity and diversity organically until they become the new norm, as they should be.

I have one last comment before passing you on to Marguerite. There are many compelling reasons that illustrate the importance of achieving gender balance in the leadership of our cultural institutions. The one closest to my heart is how important it is that we give clear aspirational messages to our youth about what they can achieve in the future. In our industry, the message we send is that diversity and parity is a fundamental given, whether people are in front, behind, or in the boardroom driving the creation of creative content.

● (1015)

Our youth see that equality represented when they look at who is doing what in the cultural space in Canada. A personal example from last week is that my 12-year-old daughter was lucky enough to be in Ottawa on a school trip and came home thrilled to have gone to the Supreme Court of Canada. Her first question to me was whether I had met former chief justice Beverley McLachlin, as she had a really good job. The second question was about how she could get that job when she was older.

Ms. Marguerite Pigott (Vice-President, Outreach and Strategic Initiatives, Canadian Media Producers Association): We still have much work to do in terms of reaching gender parity, but we've made meaningful strides and have a clear path towards achieving the goal. We've learned a few key things along the way.

First, deploy the entire leadership. To address long-standing challenges such as gender parity, organizations must pursue the goal in a credible and determined way. This requires the visible participation of the entire leadership.

Second, recruitment is essential. Reaching out directly to engage members to run, and clearly stating gender parity and diversity goals, are crucial steps to take on an ongoing basis.

Third, develop talent. It's not enough to recruit. It is essential to build a pool of talent from which the recruiting will eventually occur.

In addition, this standing committee asked questions that extend beyond our unique experience, such as what has stopped women from being asked to join boards or from stepping into senior creative leadership roles, and what we can do about it.

A January 2017 study commissioned by the CMPA and authored by now CBC President Catherine Tait speaks to these questions. In "Women & Leadership: A Study of Gender Parity and Diversity in Canada's Screen Industries", the respondents listed obstacles to advancement that they faced, in this descending order: pay inequity, not being recognized for accomplishments, difficulty financing larger budget projects, gaining access to advancement possibilities, and not being able to advance beyond middle management. The list goes on from there, but these were the highest rated.

When asked what had helped them to overcome these obstacles, respondents said, in descending order: hard work and talent, support of a boss or a professional mentor, diversity and gender policies and programs, and industry mentorship programs. The results show that when looking for a solution, women start by looking in the mirror. As essential as that is, it is clear that this not enough. Policies, programs, and targeted mentorship are also critical in creating on-the-ground change.

As a result, we recommend the development of programs that address barriers to women's advancement, with a particular emphasis on mentorship, sponsorship, and executive development. We would further recommend training for boards and leadership teams in unconscious bias, and gender and diversity inclusion practices. Additionally, while quotas remain a possible policy tool for achieving parity, targets and incentives are favoured as a strong starting place, and targets in particular have started to create change at organizations such as Telefilm and the CBC.

From the study's extensive review of international literature, we also know that more disclosure of information regarding gender and diversity from public funders, public companies, and regulated broadcasters would help improve the imbalance situation. As a result, we would recommend that the Department of Canadian Heritage commission gender and diversity analyses within its portfolio organizations and the sectors they serve.

In the screen-based production industry, gender parity is not just about economic justice. It's also about how we see our world and one another. The creative and economic inequality caused by gender imbalance affects which stories get told and how women are portrayed in those stories. In releasing a 2016 report conducted by J. Walter Thompson and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, the organizations noted, "Findings show that the lack of strong female characters in film and TV have long term effects on society and the progress of women". They further noted that "the research...shows that female role models in film and TV are hugely influential in driving women to improve their lives."

The significant societal impact of the images we see on our screens reinforces the work of this committee in advancing women in key decision-making positions across the production industry and in the institutions that surround it.

We thank you for the opportunity you have given us to contribute to your review of gender parity on boards and in top creative roles in cultural institutions, and we'd be pleased to respond to your questions.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We will now move on to questions and answers, starting with Ms. Dhillon.

Ms. Dhillon, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair. I will share my time with Mr. Virani.

[*English*]

My first question is for Mr. MacDougall.

Witnesses have often testified before our committee that not enough qualified women apply for senior management roles. We've come to know that this is not true, especially when it comes to ethnic minorities or visible minorities or people who are in the LGBTQ community. They are not on the boards. What do you say to this?

My second question is, if you don't think it's true that not enough qualified women apply, what recourse would you give these applicants, as a lawyer?

Thank you.

● (1020)

Mr. Andrew MacDougall: To answer that question from my perspective, part of the issue that we see in the public companies here is the lack of ability to retain talent that is already within the organization. That's where most of those programs that I alluded to have the benefit, in that you have talented people but in some cases they are self-selecting out of the opportunity to advance because they're not perceiving that there is an opportunity for them.

One of the strong things that we encourage is to enable people to overcome those obstacles, both real and perceived, in order to advance. The challenge from a legal perspective is also to make sure that programs are sufficiently reflective of human rights codes and obligations to treat people on an equal footing. The emphasis that we come at from an employment perspective is on the inclusion end of things, rather than on the diversity aspects.

Boards of directors can be a little bit different in that they don't have the same concerns from an employment law perspective, so recruitment is more possible. In that case, the real issue is encouraging boards to look past the normal networks that they typically use for finding other board members and explore into other unfamiliar territory in terms of being able to recruit the talent that they could use on the boards.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Perfect.

We've heard also, recently, especially in the last few months, that many women have stepped forward—and even men—when it comes to sexual harassment and sexual assault. It's one thing to encourage them to come forward, but what would you do to have more preventive measures against this taking place in the first place?

Mr. Andrew MacDougall: To be honest, I actually view that as a very different issue from increasing diversity in an organization. It can be an impediment, but it is not where the focus is. In terms of measures that people could explore, clearly, the best measure is having an organization with a culture and transparency that allows for communication upward and downward throughout the organization of the values that the organization is intended to represent and that should be expected of members. That is, by far and away, the best structure in order to address that issue.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Thank you.

I'll pass the mike over to my colleague, Mr. Virani.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thank you.

I was very intrigued by what I heard from all of the witnesses. I want to build on something that Ms. Morgan raised and connected to Mr. MacDougall when she cited those statistics about the need for diversity on a number of fronts. She cited the number of visible minorities in the population but not on boards in the artistic sector.

Ms. Morgan, you raised something that dovetails with a lot of the challenges that we actually face on the political level when we try to encourage people to run, to make Parliament look more like Canada. Sometimes it's the sticker shock of having to do fundraising and having to expend money out of their own pockets that is a challenge for people. We know about the racialization of poverty, and we know that some people who have been here longer or who don't face certain challenges are able to accrue more wealth.

You highlighted that, at Soulpepper, the normal policy of your board is that a new board member would be expected either to make donations to Soulpepper or to fundraise for those donations. You also said in your testimony that Soulpepper, however, will carve out an exception if there's a meritorious candidate that it wants, that it will waive those general requirements.

The question I have is basically twofold. First, do you think that the policy you have at Soulpepper is very much the norm in the arts and culture sector, among the ROMs and AGOs of the world, so to speak? Second, do you think your willingness to explore that exception is an anomaly, or is it also something that may be applied to other institutions of your ilk?

I know that's a bit unfair because I'm asking you to talk about the sector broadly. However, I ask you to explore that with us because I think it's a very important point.

● (1025)

Ms. Vanessa Morgan: From my understanding, certainly the large arts institutions—like the ROM, the Canadian Opera Company, and things like that—have a very high dollar amount that they expect people to contribute. It's like $50,000 or something in that range. It's a very high number. Smaller organizations, as I understand it, also have expectations but to a lesser degree. I don't know of any that will waive that expectation. That's not to say that there aren't, but I don't know of any that waive that expectation.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. MacDougall or Ms. Pigott, would either of you want to weigh in on this issue about how you diversify a board when you have such challenging financial obstacles or requirements?

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: Go ahead, Mr. MacDougall.

Mr. Andrew MacDougall: Certainly. In this area of the not-for-profits, the expectation of contributing financially is clearly an impediment. I don't think there's a simple answer to get around that particular need for these types of organizations.

The only other way to approach this is to broaden your search parameters and to try to find, within some of those other communities, individuals who may be wealthier. There are individuals out there who have had a great deal of success in the business world, so some of those might be potential candidates.

Unless there's another source of addressing the financial issues for organizations, I think this will continue to be an impediment.

The Chair: Okay. We're going to have to leave it on that note.

We're going to Mr. Eglinski, please.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to all the witnesses here today. I'm very glad to see us taking on this study.

I was very fortunate in being an RCMP officer in the early 1960s and 1970s. I worked in an organization that was totally male-dominant for a while, and then we got female recruitment in 1975. It took us about 25 years in that organization to bring some of the female members to the highest ranks. Bev Busson became the commanding officer for British Columbia. It took us 33 years to bring one to the top now, which is great. It's a great appointment and I'm glad to see that.

I have three questions for each of the groups here.

I'll start with you at Hoskin. You're more industry-related than you are with the arts and that stuff. I think you mentioned that earlier. You mention in your report that 63% of companies now have at least one woman on their board of directors, and you think we should be pushing that further ahead. Do you find that part of the problem, especially in the mining industry, I'll say, or maybe in manufacturing or construction, is that because there's a lack of female populations in those working groups, they may have a hard time drawing upon the expertise? Is that one of the problems you're seeing?

Mr. Andrew MacDougall: That is an element of the problem. There's a large focus on finding the individuals who have industry expertise, and in particular, who have had CEO industry expertise.

If you focus on that, you immediately reduce the number of potential candidates, but if you instead look at people with senior management expertise and at other industries where there might be transferable skills, you can increase the diversity on the board of the organization. In some of those industries—mining, forestry, and oil and gas—we haven't seen enough of that happening, whereas utilities and real estate tend to do a little better.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Thank you.

Let's go on to you, Ms. Morgan. Thank you for having as many people involved in your organization as you do.

I look around the room and at a lot of my colleagues here in the House of Commons.... Some were approached. Others, like this young lady, Ms. Falk, took it upon herself to strive towards becoming a member. Is there a need for us to continue to approach females to move ahead or are you finding that a greater amount of them are taking that step forward now? Is there something we need to encourage to encourage people to take that step forward?

● (1030)

Ms. Vanessa Morgan: I think more women are taking the step on their own. I think it also depends on whether you're talking about arts leadership, as in artistic directors and executive directors, or if you're talking about arts boards. For boards, I think the financial aspect is important, because people need to or are expected to have money and do need to have time to allocate to being board members.

In terms of arts leadership, I think policies to encourage more women in the higher levels....There are a lot of women involved in the arts, but there's not the same progression that would result in more people being at the top level. I think that's where policies could be effected, particularly for arts organizations that are provided with funding from various levels of government. If those funders could use that as the carrot and make it clear in the expectations that they're looking for transparency and ask for the statistics on who's involved and at what levels, I think that would help.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Thank you.

I'm going to move on to Canadian Media Producers Association.

Ms. Pigott, do you think we would get the results we're looking for? We all believe here in this room that we need to increase gender equality on boards. Are we going to do it without approaching the female sector? Do you think it would happen on its own, or is there a compulsory need for us to do this?

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: In a study that I read just last night, it said that without any policies or programs, and just left to operate—this was a study of 21,980 companies over 91 countries—as they currently are, they will achieve gender parity by the year 2200.

So I would say no, sir. I would not regard that as a laudable goal.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Thank you. That's what I was looking for.

I'm going to let my colleague finish off my time. I believe I have a minute and a half.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Perfect. Thank you so much for being here today.

I also have a question for Ms. Pigott.

You had mentioned that our TV and media have a great influence on women and that we need roles to encourage women, to influence women, and that type of thing. In my past line of work, I found that any form of media sets the culture and tone for our society.

How do we do that when we have media that's full of sex, or full of degrading or demeaning things towards women and youth? How do we achieve that?

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: When you control who tells the story, you control the story. We need more women directors, more women screenwriters, more women producers. There is no shortage of talent in any of those categories.

What we find, when you do a review of the numbers coming out of Telefilm or the Canada Media Fund, is that women producers, writers, and directors are generally being funded at lower-budget levels and not so much at higher-budget levels.

That is going to change over time, but to Mr. Eglinski's question, certainly not without proactive measures. Telefilm, the CMF, CBC, the NFB, all have proactive measures in place. Certainly the industry and the CMPA are taking a leadership role and are taking additional measures to advance women in key creative positions. That's how you change those stories. That's how you change how little girls see themselves and understand what's possible for them, and that's how they grow into women who are going to step forward and take those roles that they should be taking now.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: For sure. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Aubin, go ahead.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank each of our witnesses for joining us this morning.

I would like to start by quickly going around the table and asking you to answer in the order you made your presentations in the beginning.

You are appearing before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, which is pretty representative of the House of Commons. There are about a dozen members around the table, including four women, who account for about 33% of the total. As a result, we are not even reaching parity.

Do you think Parliament has credibility on this issue when it does not itself have a policy for achieving parity? We have no official policy to guarantee, when an election takes place, that the number of candidates respects parity, which would enable us to get more women elected.

If you find that the question is too risky in terms of confrontation, I will rephrase it. Would it help every organization you represent to see the federal government implement measures to ensure parity in the House of Commons?

Mr. MacDougall, do you have a comment?

● (1035)

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew MacDougall: I think one of the things to bear in mind is that although there is absolutely a benefit in seeing women in roles of leadership in an organization, you need to have a dialogue and support from a broader community. That is, you're not going to achieve anything without advocates from men within an organization and broadly.

I think there is absolutely a role that Parliament can play, notwithstanding that it has not reached parody yet in terms of advocating for change. Whether we need to legislate to improve representation at Parliament is the trickier question, which gets to the fundamentals of the way we elect our representatives. I think that one, frankly, is a difficult question to be able to answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Do you have a comment, Ms. Morgan?

[*English*]

Ms. Vanessa Morgan: For arts organizations, it's more to do with transparency and explaining and showing where we are, rather than a top-down, legislated, or rules-based requirement. It allows the patrons and the audiences to see how many women are involved and at what level. I think it's more on a reporting side and explaining to the public where women are involved.

Certainly, in the performing arts industry, there's a very strong movement afoot; the public themselves are sort of forcing that issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Ms. Pigott, do you want to say anything?

[*English*]

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: From our perspective, when we're having conversations around committee composition, board composition, and conference speakers, something I hear cited again and again is that we need 50% women. "Come on, the government did it: 50% in the cabinet. We can do it." That was a sterling example that is cited often and is enormously encouraging.

From our point of view, the second thing is that studies show that, in media, women hire women. If there's a woman producer, she's going to hire women directors. She's going to hire women screenwriters, etc. There is a trickle-down effect, or a virtuous circle, you could say. When we see more women in power, I think the same thing applies.

Whether or not that should be mandated is beyond the scope of my expertise, so I won't comment on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

My next question is for Ms. Morgan.

In your opening remarks, you alluded to a position to be filled in your organization for which the list of selected candidates had 12 names. Five of the candidates were women. I was thinking that this figure was close to parity. It's not bad, except that only one person will be selected. Based on that short list, how to ensure that the individual chosen at the end of the process could be a woman?

At the end of the process, are the only elements that are considered in selecting the individual their qualifications or the view they have of your organization, or is there a point system that supports the advancement of women?

[*English*]

Ms. Vanessa Morgan: That is something we do worry about. We could get down to two highly qualified people. I think if we were to select the male candidate from the two finalists, he would have to be quite superior to the female candidate or we would tend to go to the female candidate, because of the current environment.

In a way, it's a bit of a reverse bias; if they're equal, the woman will get the job.

● (1040)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

I want to come back to Mr. MacDougall.

In an article you published in *Policy Options* concerning the need boards of directors have to evolve more quickly in terms of diversity, you say that the turnover of administrators does not make it possible to achieve parity quickly enough and that the quotas have helped achieve a higher level of representation for women on boards, and more quickly.

Could you give us a few examples of those quotas and the way to do that, and tell us whether that is the direction we should be focusing on?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew MacDougall: Certainly. There is no doubt that in countries that have imposed quotas for women on the board, companies somehow find women and they succeed in achieving those quotas. France imposed 40%. They have 40% women on the board. Several countries are all along the same vein.

If you impose a quota you will absolutely achieve that quota within the time frame contemplated by the quota. The problems with quotas are that they don't convey the right message. They do, as some of the other participants alluded to today, lead to a perception that somebody is there because of the quota and not because they are bringing the skills and talents that are needed to help the board with the board's role and responsibilities.

I am generally very much opposed to quotas, but I did flag in that publication that we might be able to accelerate change if we did impose a quota for companies that had boards of at least four directors and required those companies to have at least one woman on the board. We've noted in our report that the biggest change year over year was the number of all-male boards declining dramatically —by 9%—down to, I think, 36% of outstanding boards.

The Chair: I'll have to cut you there because we're already over time.

We are now going to Ms. Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thanks to everyone for their excellent presentations.

Ms. Morgan, it was actually in Davenport, the riding I represent in downtown west Toronto. I hold these artist strategy sessions two to three times a year, and it was out of a discussion that I had at the last one when we talked about Soulpepper and the situation that had evolved there late last year that led to me put in a motion to have this study done. Soulpepper was very much a part of inspiring this whole study, and I think this is a positive thing.

A key fact that came out was that, with artistic directors, there is a low number of women artistic directors, and you correctly reinforced that as part your presentation. I want to talk about that for a minute and maybe see some specific recommendations that we at the federal level can do to be helpful around this.

We heard from Ms. Pigott that funding for women in programming is less than for men, so we know that's part of the issue. We heard that there is a handful of really tiny organizations and some really big ones, so it's really hard to build that capacity. How do you help build that?

I wanted to maybe just pause for a second to see whether or not there's something we can do in that area in terms of helping to build that capacity or helping a bit more in terms of those senior leadership roles within the arts and culture sector. What might be specific recommendations, beyond maybe ensuring there is adequate funding, particularly for those plays or artistic endeavours that are led by women?

Ms. Vanessa Morgan: If there's a way to set up international training programs to.... At a lot of universities now, students will go to spend a year abroad, so I'd recommend some type of program like that where people could go to the U.S., to the U.K., or other places where there are larger or mid-sized theatre companies so they could gain that experience, and not necessarily at a young age but maybe after they've run a small company in Canada, and they'd like to move up. There's got to be way to gain that experience, but it's very expensive for someone to pick up and move to London or something, so if there could be some kind of international training program, I think that would be really helpful to allow people gain that experience.

● (1045)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

Ms. Pigott, would you have anything to add to that?

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: In terms of developing female leaders...?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I mean more to that specific artistic director-level position.

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: In film and television, what we're seeing is that there are many programs that are currently in place and working well. Women in View runs Five in Focus. They run 2xMore, and CMPA is involved in both of those.

Individual production companies are hiring 50% women directors. I know that Shaftesbury is very aggressive in terms of using women directors in predominant roles. I think that kind of growth is beginning to happen, and we just need more of it. Sponsorship and mentorship opportunities like the ones that Women in View are creating are very important in terms of bringing that to pass, and ensuring that women producers can produce at higher budget levels is also going to be very important, because they tend to hire women in key creative positions.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

The reality is that, as women progress in their careers, we want to have kids, and family becomes very important, so we want to work as hard on our careers as on making sure that we have some of the flexibility we need to be able to take care of our family. To what extent does there need to be some more work done in the artistic and cultural sector around that?

Perhaps I'll start off with you, Ms. Pigott, and maybe Ms. Morgan, and then I'll go to Osler.

I think that's something we kind of mentioned, but that's key. We need the flexibility, and that's the reality.

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: Yes, I couldn't agree with you more.

Child care is a huge issue. When a woman is shooting a movie or shooting a television series, the hours are absolutely intense, so there does have to be some kind of support for child care.

Interestingly, in another study I read, it mentioned that one of the key programs that was really essential in creating change was paternal leave, because it changed how society saw the role of women and men. We think of child care programs being just so that women can have some of the pressure taken off. Well, maybe the pressure can be shared, so if we change that dynamic, more becomes possible.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: To what extent do you think there's something that needs to happen within the arts and culture sector versus everything coming sort of from the government in terms of support around child care? What more can happen? What is the additional recommendation?

We have put in paternity care sort of at the national level, so we've put something into that. Is there something more that we can do, or is it just that there needs to be broader recognition of more flexibility within the industry?

Ms. Marguerite Pigott: It's such an important question. Because you're opening a door for a really important opportunity in responding to that, I'd actually want to confer with some other women's organizations and get back to you on that. There is no question that child care needs to be part of the mix of things. One of the things that we have talked about is whether there can be child care on a set. A set is a dangerous place. That doesn't work, so how do you make this workable?

There are conversations that are happening, and I'd like to dip back into those conversations before coming back to you with something concrete, if I may.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you. I appreciate that, and I think the committee would welcome that.

I just want to point out that we talk a lot about mentorship and sponsorship. I just really like the fact that you've actually used the word "sponsorship" because I do think, as someone who used to be an executive for a large financial institution, that we started moving to that, beyond mentorship, at least within the financial industry, to actually try to get women beyond the vice-president role and below the board level into the SVP and the C-suite. Sponsorship was really important. I just want to say that I acknowledge your using that term.

It was not a term.... Mr. MacDougall, you used the word "mentorship". I just would say that this is actually a very important distinction for me and is something I encourage.

I know that I'm out of time, so I just want to say thanks again to all of you for your excellent presentations.

The Chair: Thank you to all of the witnesses. It was really interesting.

I appreciate all of the questions and your indulgence in going slightly over time today.

The meeting is adjourned.

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